

This testimony corrects an inadvertent error in my previous testimony]

I am a law abiding gun owner. I support legislation that will stop letting mentally ill and dangerous people obtain guns, stronger laws concerning illegal ownership of guns, use of guns in crimes and eliminating plea bargains for crimes committed with guns, and increased security and protection of our schools. I believe in truly enforcing existing gun laws before we add more gun laws. I oppose any gun bill that targets, either legally or financially, law abiding gun owners. I oppose any bill that limits legal gun owners Constitutional or civil rights. I oppose any bill that limits the ability of a legal gun owner to defend themselves or their families.

After the massacre at Sandy Hook, we need to ask why we are pursuing gun control legislation. Can we stop another school massacre? Adam Lanza broke 20 laws, stricter bans and registration would not stop him. CT has some of the strictest gun laws in the US. Even President Obama and Mayor Bloomberg have stated publicly that these new proposals would not have stopped Sandy Hook. Limiting magazine capacity would not have saved unarmed children. *You can't legislate away evil.* So, if the gun control bills being proposed would not stop mass murder, why are we proposing them? To lower violent crime?

We have evidence that removing guns from lawful gun owners does not decrease violent crime. Chicago, Camden, NJ and Washington DC are prime examples. Washington DC has some of the strictest gun laws in the US, yet the violent crime rate is 1202/100K people and a murder rate of 17.5/100K, it's lowest since 1966. This is after the Heller decision, before that, the homicide rate was 30.8/100K (National average for violent crime is 386.3, homicide 4.7/100K). Washington DC should be the safest city in America, yet it is far from it. A recent Washington Times article (<http://m.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/jan/24/states-crime-rates-show-scant-linkage-to-gun-laws/>) shows that *"a review of recent state laws by The Washington Times shows no discernible correlation between stricter rules and lower gun-crime rates in the states...The Times analysis looked at the Brady Campaign's rankings for strength of each state's gun laws and at Mayors Against Illegal Guns' rankings for how states perform in disclosing mental health data to the background check system. That information was then matched against the FBI's 2011 gun-crime rankings for homicides, robberies and assaults. The results showed no correlation among the strength of laws and disclosure and the crime rates."* After banning guns over 15 years ago, the UK has a higher violent crime rate than the US (2034 vs 456/100K) and in the decade following the Labor party's election and banning of handguns in 1997, the number of recorded violent attacks soared by 77% to 1.2 million in 2007 (<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1196941/The-violent-country-Europe-Britain-worse-South-Africa-U-S.html>). A recent study published in the *Harvard Journal of Law & Public Policy* concluded that there is a **negative correlation between gun ownership and violent crime** in countries internationally. (*Harvard Journal of Law & Public Policy* (pp. 649-694). Volume 30, Number 2). Even VP Biden remarked in a recent Google+ conference that assault rifles are not responsible for many shootings in the US and eliminating them won't solve gun problems. NY Senator Ruben Diaz Sr. has recently stated that the NY ban would not do anything, people behind the guns are the problem, not the weapon itself. The economist Thomas Sowell wrote "One can cherry-pick the factual studies, or cite some studies that have subsequently been discredited, but the great bulk of the studies show that gun control laws do not in fact control guns. On net balance, they do not save lives but cost lives." (<http://townhall.com/columnists/thomassowell/2013/01/22/do-gun-control-laws-control-guns-n1493958>) In Vermont, you do not need to register a firearm to carry, yet, as Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) noted, his home state of Vermont has the lowest crime rate in the US despite its lack of gun control. Similarly, increased registration requirements do not effect violence rates. Canada stopped the registration of long arms. "Public Safety Minister Vic Toews told reporters...that the government's actions are long overdue. "It does nothing to help put an end to gun crimes, nor has it saved one Canadian life, ...It criminalizes hard-working and law-abiding citizens such as farmers and sport shooters, and it has been a billion-dollar boondoggle..." (<http://news.nationalpost.com/2012/02/15/conservatives-and-enthusiasts-cheer-the-end-of-the-long-gun-registry/>) While we need to make sure that the mentally ill and felons are in the NICS database and cannot get guns, extensive registration of legal gun owners is just an expense with no discernible benefit.

I also oppose an arbitrary reduction to magazine size from the standard magazines in use. First, the determination for the number of bullets needed to defend oneself or our loved ones should be up to the gun owner, not a legislator in Hartford. You will not be there when a father wakes at 3AM to the sound of breaking glass, or a woman is walking back to her car one night and confronts one or more rapists. In the stress of a life and death situation, hitting your assailant is difficult, even at close range. And unlike movies, one shot will not always stop an attacker (especially if

high on drugs). You are not always attacked by only one person. Shouldn't the decision on what to have to defend yourself be up to the law abiding citizen? A murderer intent on creating a name for himself by slaughtering innocents will have the ability to choose the time and place for an attack. This would allow him to load up with multiple magazines and because he is bringing the violence to others, can reload at will. In contrast, the law abiding victim, can only respond to violence and rarely has time to reload. I would rather the victim have the ability to stop the murder, and if it takes 17 bullets in a standard magazine to make that person effective, that should be their choice, not the choice made in Hartford to give the illusion of increased safety. ***And lastly, and most importantly, only law abiding gun owners will comply. Criminals that already own illegal guns, will not turn in banned magazines.*** This is exemplified by NY rushing amendments for law enforcement officers to keep "banned" magazines because they shouldn't be outgunned by criminals. They are admitting that the ban will do nothing to stop crime and that only citizens will be at a disadvantage if they are the target of a criminal.

The most important thread though all this discussion of legislation, is the fact ***that more laws only affect the law abiding citizen***, the citizen *you would take rights away from by enacting more gun control laws*. A 2006 FBI study "Violent Encounters: A Study of Felonious Assaults on Our Nation's Law Enforcement Officers." looked at 800 incidents, the researchers then selected 40 to study. Their conclusion was "Predominately handguns were used in the assaults on officers and all but one were obtained illegally, usually in street transactions or in thefts. In contrast to media myth, none of the firearms in the study was obtained from gun shows. Researcher Davis, in a presentation and discussion for the International Assn. of Chiefs of Police, noted that ***none of the attackers interviewed was hindered by any law—federal, state or local—that has ever been established to prevent gun ownership. They just laughed at gun laws.***" [Emphasis added]. More laws give the illusion that something is being done, when in actuality, you are disarming law abiding citizens. Adding taxes to ammunition would not have made Adam Lanza decide to stay home that day. Limits to ammunition purchases, will not stop those that want to use guns for evil. Criminals and gangs that get guns illegally, will not balk at an ammo tax, they will steal what they need, or get it the same way they will get guns, illegally. Many gun owners shoot hundreds of rounds a week in practice or competition (IPDA, IPSC, bulls eye, pin, etc). Restrictive ammunition bills only harm these people who practice the safe use of guns.

Over 90 million legal gun owners have not caused the gun violence in America. Half the households in America have a gun, and they are not the cause of mass murders or street crime with a gun. 67% of firearm murders took place in the country's 50 largest metro areas. The majority of murders in the cities with the worst homicide rates are gang-related. And while it isn't always possible to be certain whether a killing was gang-related, the majority of homicide victims in city after city have been found to have criminal records. Mental illness and gang-related or criminal use are the main causes of violent crime. Much of this is drug related. This is where you should be looking to make CT safer. Enforce the laws we have, and fully prosecute criminals that use guns, make stiffer sentences and then carry them out. Do not allow plea bargains. Stop early release of violent criminals.

Guns are not the problem. The human propensity for evil is the problem and sometimes guns are the solution in that they can stop bad men from accomplishing their vicious aims. A gun is a tool, like a hammer. A hammer can build a home, or kill (and has been used more than rifles for that purpose – FBI crime statistics). A gun in the hands of a law enforcement officer is a good thing, in the hands of a murderer is not. Millions of citizens have made the decision to have a firearm to defend innocent life. They respect firearms and use, store and handle them safely and legally. We should thank them for trying to make our society safer, not vilify them as an imagined cause of our ills. *Should we make criminals of all the citizens that legally bought firearms in CT because of one evil person? Should we judge all legal gun owners by the actions of gang bangers and isolated, evil, mentally ill murderers? Should we judge law abiding gun owners to be criminal because they are exercising their rights? Do we make them a separate class of citizen because of this?* I say no. I ask you to stand by the oath you took to uphold the Constitution and protect the rights and civil liberties of the citizens of CT. "Every citizen has a right to bear arms in defense of himself and the state." Protect the citizens of CT, do not infringe our rights. Do not pass laws that will cost money the state doesn't have, and will not solve the violence problem you are trying to solve. Show evidence that what you propose would indeed save lives. Do not seriously erode the rights and reputations of law abiding gun owners to pass "feel good" measures that will only give the illusion of security. We, the people, deserve more. *"People willing to trade their freedom for temporary security deserve neither and will lose both."* - Benjamin Franklin

Thank you for your consideration,

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